

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for mass-producing cooked eggs, the method comprising:

dropping an egg having a yolk and a white through a device to break the yolk sac, wherein the device comprises one or more depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, the segments are separated therebetween to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through;

depositing the egg into a mold, wherein the mold receives only one egg and has an irregularly irregular-shaped peripheral boundary;

cooking the deposited egg in the mold;

removing the cooked egg from the mold; and

cooling the cooked egg below room temperature.

2. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 1, in which the egg includes whole eggs, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs.

3. (Original) A method as in claim 1, in which the egg product includes whole eggs having intact yolks, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs having intact yolks.

4. (Original) A method as in claim 1, in which the egg product includes whole eggs having essentially all intact yolks, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs having essentially all intact yolks.

5 - 11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 1, wherein dropping an egg comprises dropping a plurality of eggs and wherein the mold is arranged side to side along a width dimension and end to end along a length dimension with a plurality of other molds, and in which the depositing includes depositing the plurality of eggs along the width into the plurality of molds at substantially the same time.

13. (Original) A method as in claim 12, in which the depositing includes depositing the plurality of eggs along the width while the molds are moving along the length dimension.

14. (Original) A method as in claim 1, in which the method includes breaking the egg shells while the whole eggs are spaced a first distance apart from each other, followed by diverting the

broken egg contents in the width dimension to a second distance apart from each other to drop into the molds.

15 – 17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 1, wherein the mold has a first depression and a second depression disposed within the first depression, wherein the depositing includes depositing the egg products into the first and second depressions.

19. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 18, wherein the egg product includes whole eggs having intact yolks, wherein the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs and allowing the yolks to settle into the second depression.

20. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 18, wherein the mold includes a bottom surface having a depth that varies irregularly over the bottom surface.

21. (Previously Presented) A method for breaking egg yolks comprising:

dropping an egg having a yolk and a white through a device for rupturing the egg yolk sac, wherein the device comprises one or more depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, and wherein the segments are separated therebetween to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through; and

depositing the egg into a mold, wherein the mold receives only one egg.

22 – 23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 22, in which the device has a plurality of depressions and can receive a plurality of egg yolks simultaneously.

25. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 22, in which the device has a plurality of depressions arranged in a side-by-side pattern.

26. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 23, in which the device has a plurality of depressions, each disposed in a downwardly extending plate portion.

27 – 58. (Canceled.)

59. (Previously Presented) A method for making cooked whole eggs, the method comprising:

mechanically conveying a plurality of whole eggs, the eggs having a shell and egg contents including an egg yolk and an egg white;

mechanically breaking the conveyed plurality of egg shells;

dropping the eggs through a device to break the yolk sac, wherein the device comprises a plurality of depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, and wherein the segments are separated therebetween to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through;

allowing the egg contents to fall into a plurality of molds wherein each mold receives only one egg;

mechanically conveying the molds containing the egg contents into a heating area; and cooking the egg contents in the molds.

60. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 59, in which the egg conveying, egg breaking, and mold conveying include mechanisms selected from the group consisting of pneumatic, electrical, magnetic, hydraulic, purely mechanical, and electro-mechanical mechanisms and combinations thereof.

61. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 59, in which the egg conveying includes mechanically carrying each egg in an egg carrier.

62. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the egg shell mechanical breaking includes breaking the egg shell with a knife.

63. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds are joined together into a closed loop of linked molds, and in which the mold conveying includes moving the loop of ~~linked having the~~ molds toward the heating area.

64. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have an ~~irregularly irregular~~ shaped outline, such that cooked eggs have a resulting ~~irregularly irregular~~ shaped outline.

65. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have an ~~irregularly irregular~~ shaped bottom surface, such that the cooked eggs have a resulting ~~irregularly irregular~~ shaped surface.

66. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have a first depression and a second depression located within the first depression further comprising disposing the egg yolks in the second depression.

67. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have a symmetrical outline, such that the cooked eggs have a symmetrical outline.

68. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have a rounded outline, such that the cooked eggs have a rounded outline.

69 – 70. (Canceled)

71. (Currently Amended) A method for making cooked whole eggs having an egg shell and egg contents including egg yolk and egg white, the method comprising:

- automatically conveying whole eggs to an egg-breaking location;

- automatically breaking the egg shells of the whole eggs;

- dropping the eggs through a device to break the yolk sac, wherein the device comprises a plurality of depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, and wherein the segments are separated therebetween to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through;

- allowing the contents of only one whole egg to fall into one mold;

- automatically conveying each mold into a heating area; and

- cooking the egg contents in each mold in the heating area.

72. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 1 wherein the mold comprises a planar surface having a depression therein and wherein the depression has an irregularly shaped outline.

73. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression outline is asymmetric about any vertical plane drawn through the planar surface and the depression.

74. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the planar surface is formed of a non-stick, food grade material.

75. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the mold comprises a plurality of depressions in the planar surface.

76. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression has a flat bottom.

77. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression has upwardly and outwardly beveled edges.

78. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the mold include a bottom surface having an irregularly varying depth over the bottom surface.

79. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression includes a first depression and a second depression disposed within the first depression.

80. (Currently Amended) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 1 wherein the one or more depressions are ~~depression is~~ cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent to form the opening.

81. (Currently Amended) The method for breaking egg yolks of claim 21 wherein the one or more depressions are ~~depression is~~ cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent to form the opening.

82. (Canceled.)

83. (Currently Amended) The method for making cooked whole eggs of claim 59, wherein the one or more depressions are ~~depression is~~ cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent to form the opening.

84. (Currently Amended) The method for making cooked whole eggs having an egg shell and egg contents including egg yolk and egg white of claim 71, wherein the one or more depressions are ~~depression is~~ cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent ~~downward~~ to form the opening.